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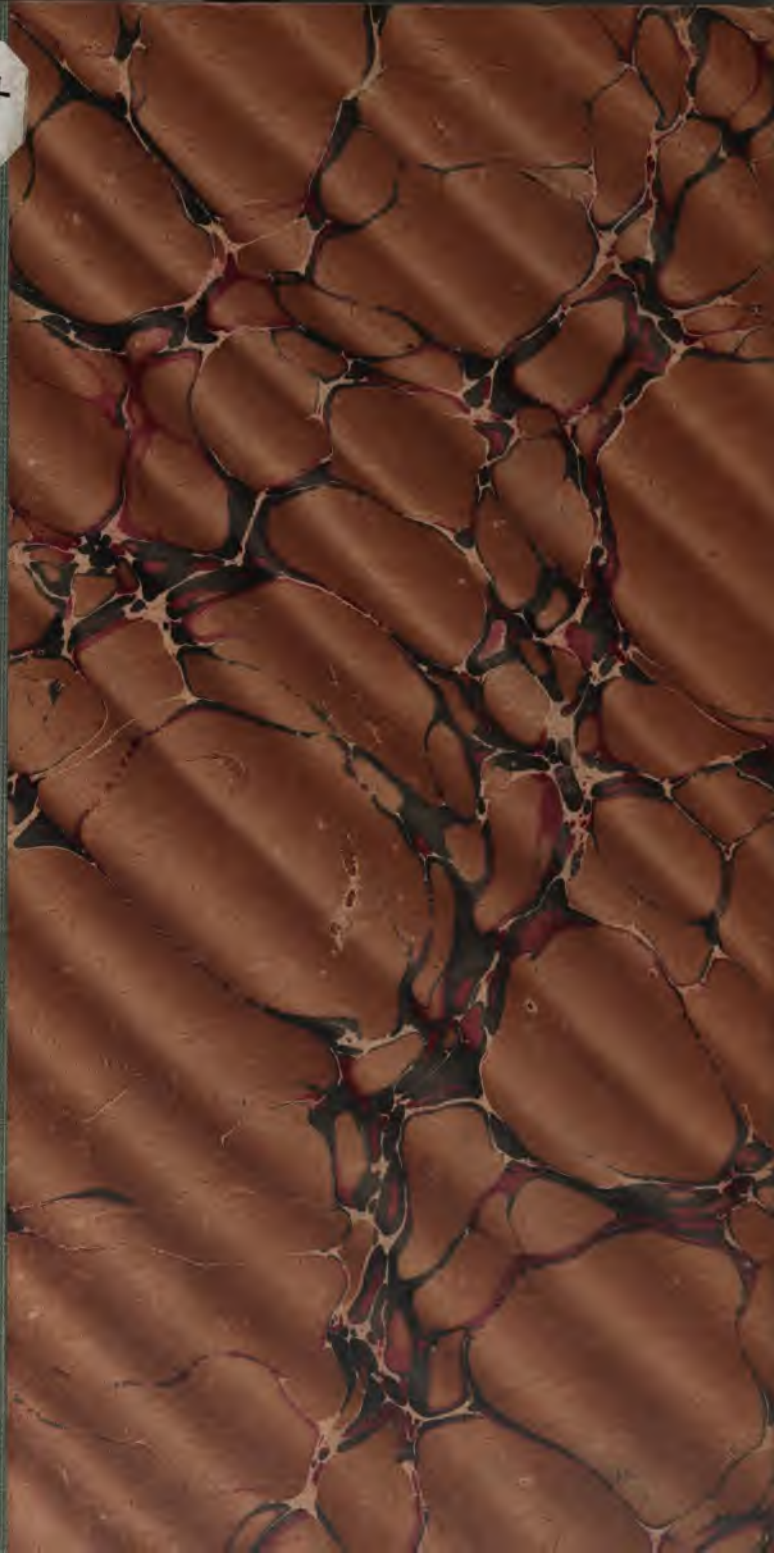
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Recent Seceders from the Society of Friends

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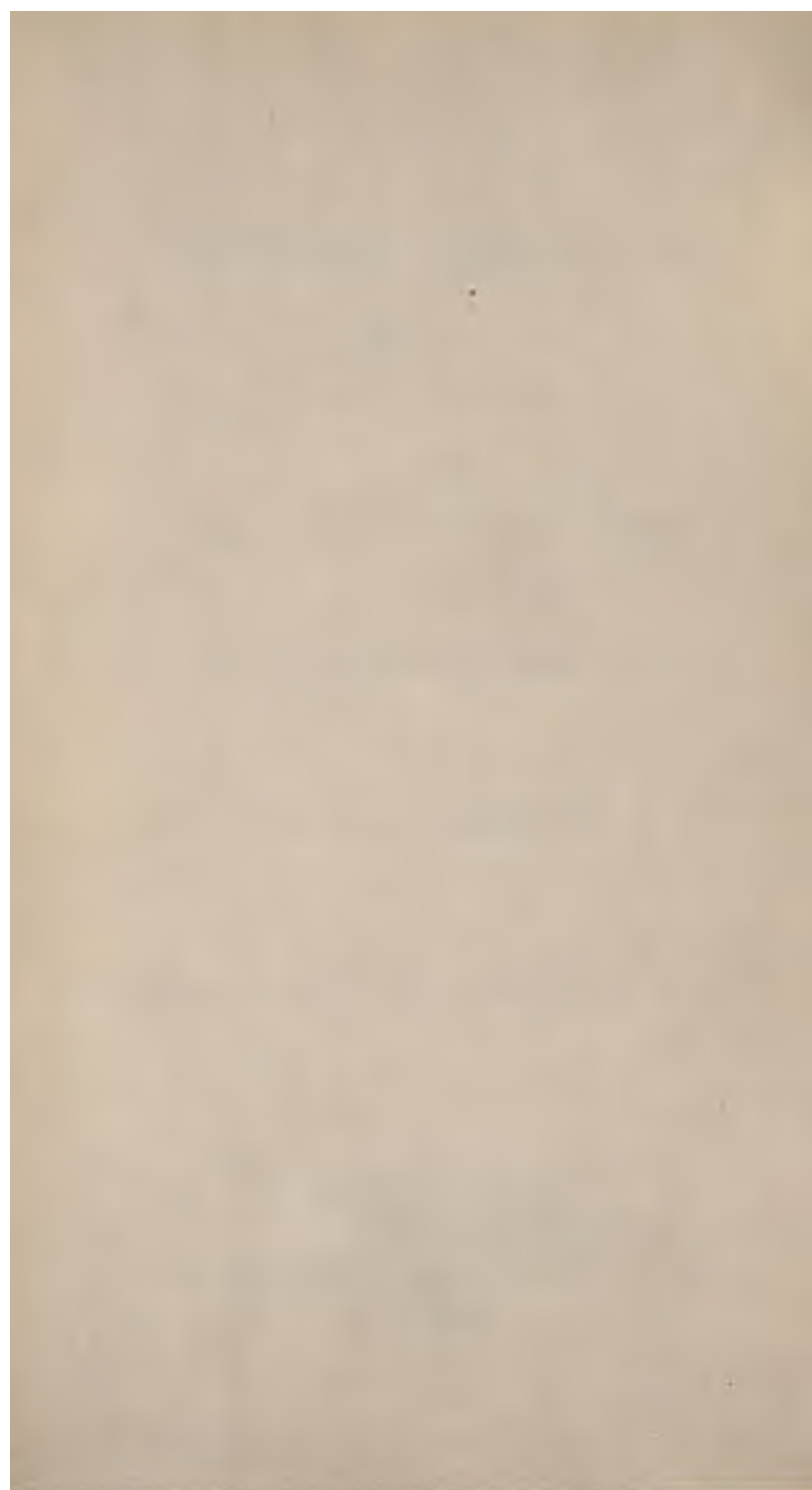
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FROM

Henry Joel Cadbury



A
SCRIPTURAL EXAMINATION
OF SOME OF
THE DOCTRINES
OF
THOSE WHO HAVE RECENTLY SECEDED
FROM
THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.
BY
WILLIAM RICHARDSON.

"Then if any man shall say unto you, lo! here is Christ, or there; believe it not."

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE:
PRINTED BY T. AND J. HODGSON:
AND SOLD BY DARTON AND HARVEY, GRACECHURCH-STREET;
AND EDMUND FRY, BISHOPSGATE-STREET, LONDON.

1839.

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PREFACE.

IN presenting these remarks on the unsound opinions of the recent seceders, from the Society of Friends, it may be suitable to apprise the reader, that it did not come within the design of the author, to devote much attention to the many calumnies that they have thrown on the community which they have left; this appeared the less needful, as most, if not all their charges against that body, at least those of a doctrinal tendency, have been long since refuted, by the writers of the early times of the Society, in their replies to opposers of their day. The charge of Deism, in particular, with the hackneyed allusion to Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, has long since had all the attention due to so stale an article; but for a particular refutation of these charges, the reader is referred to an excellent work by Alexander Arscott, entitled "Some Considerations relating to the present state of the Christian Religion."

With respect to the charge of Semi-Pelagianism brought in this essay, against the seceders, it must be left to the reader to consider, whether it be well sustained from the premises adduced.

It may be objected by some, that there is a redundancy of Scriptural references in the work now presented to the reader, but it should be recollected that the object was to produce a Scriptural exposure of error, rather than to assume the possession of great intellectual endowments, or of powers

that might be judged needful for "untrammelled" research. Besides, the author having observed the manner in which some of the writers on the opposite side of the question, have "twisted" certain passages of scripture to suit their purpose, considered it, therefore, better in many instances to give the context with the text relied upon, for confirmation of the view taken, in order that the reader might the more readily perceive, whether the inferences were fairly, and it may be said honestly, drawn. Not that the writer would be understood to assume that no mistakes have been made, with respect to the genuine import and signification, of every passage referred to, though he hopes that there are not any which will affect any important point of doctrine.

With these observations, he would submit his labour of love, for such he dares assume that it has been, to the candid perusal of his readers.

North Shields, 3d Month, 1839.

A

SCRIPTURAL EXAMINATION, &c.

THAT the natural man "at his best estate, is altogether vanity,"* will he readily conceded by most of those who profess the Christian name. "There is none righteous, no not one."† The enquiry, therefore, becomes highly important, how is he to be recovered from his sinful condition, cleansed from the pollutions of his fallen nature, and restored to "the image of Him, who created him?"‡

The cry of the Psalmist from a true sense of his condition, was,—“And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is *in Thee.*”||

According to the doctrine of the Apostle Peter, the baptism,—the cleansing operation that doth now save us, is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. That this baptism must be felt and experienced in the soul, or inner man, is evident from the testimony of the Apostle Paul,—“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, by the *washing* of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour: that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life.”§

The epistles of the two Apostles just quoted, appear to have been addressed to experienced Christians; that of Peter, “to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus,” &c., whom he salutes, “Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.”¶ That of Paul, to his “own son after the common faith;” it was, therefore, hardly to be expected that they should describe

* Psalm xxxix., 5.

† Rom. iii., 10.

‡ Coll. iii., 10.

|| Ps. xxxix., 7.

§ Titus, iii., 5, 6, 7.

¶ 1st Peter i., 2.

very minutely, the first steps or beginnings of a holy life ; yet Paul declares to Titus, asserting the general principle that the grace of God that *bringeth* salvation hath appeared to *all* men, *teaching* us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works,"* but it is remarkable with what agreement, they both press the necessity of a spiritual influence, throughout the Christian progress.

We have, preserved to us, in the commission given by the Lord Jesus, to "his chosen vessel," Paul, an epitome of the doctrines, which the Apostle was directed to teach, and which shews, in few words, the beginning,—the order of the progress,—and the consummation of the Christian faith and warfare, with the final triumph and victory of the Saints.

"At mid day, O, King," saith Paul, in his speech before Agrippa,—“I saw in the way, a light from Heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me, and them which journeyed with me ; and when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice, speaking unto me, and saying, in the Hebrew tongue,—Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, “Who art thou, Lord ?” And he said, “I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest ; but rise, and stand upon thy feet : for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister, and a witness, both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee : delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to *open* their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan, unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”†

Here, it appears, the commencement of the work of redemption in the creature, must be to have the eyes opened, and to be turned from darkness to light : and how, otherwise, can any one obtain a true sense of his lost condition ? The Apostle says that it is Christ, as foretold by Moses and the Prophets, who “should shew light unto the people, and the Gentiles ;”‡ and, certainly, He only, can do this, by whom “God will judge the world.”

Having *obtained* a true sight and sense of its condition, *in*

* Titus ii., 11, 14.

† Acts xxvi., 13, 19.

‡ Ib. xxvi., 23.

that light which will neither flatter nor mislead, and which needs no human expositor, to explain its teachings, for its shinings are above the brightness of the sun at mid-day, or any other created light, the mind thus led to feel the necessity of help, is oftentimes driven to cry out, in all the bitterness and anguish of unmitigated grief, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" It is then, that the mind, having been mercifully turned from darkness to light, becomes sensible of the extreme value of the invitation to *turn also* from the power of Satan unto God;—to that power which alone, can discover, and redeem from all the insidious snares, and wicked influences of the enemy of man's happiness.

But if these invitations of Divine mercy be slighted or neglected, whether immediately communicated by the "Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father," and which Christ declared should testify of him;—or mediately through those of his ministers, who are qualified, as were the early disciples, *experimentally* to bear witness of him,*—that which Christ said unto the Jews who rejected his testimony, will become applicable to such an erring soul,—"The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."†—But if, happily, the gracious invitation be accepted, and a willingness be wrought in the mind, to receive the proffered aid of Divine mercy, the shortest ejaculation from the humbled soul,—"God, be merciful!" will meet with acceptance before the throne of grace; and strength sufficient for the day will be afforded, to resist the power of Satan, through Him who is declared to be the "power of God, and the wisdom of God."‡ The soul, thus resisting, "through Christ strengthening" it, in the spiritual warfare against all its enemies, both of flesh and spirit, victory will be obtained, and a comforting evidence will be experienced, of "being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;"§ and finally, of an inheritance among them which are sanctified through faith that is in Christ.

This is indeed the faith, which is the saints' victory; and these, are the only means, by which the poor lost soul of man can be recovered out of the fall, and restored to a state of acceptance with God the Father, even through *the power* and mediation of the Son; who gave himself for us, to be a propitiation for our sins, that being baptised through the power of his cross, into the likeness of his death, we also, through the love and power of the Father, may be raised in the likeness of his resurrection, to walk in newness of life: and thus,

* John xv., 26, 27.

† 1st John xii., 48.

‡ 1st Cor. i., 24.

§ Rom. iii., 24.

having the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and being justified by his grace (although on our part, an entirely unmerited favour) we should be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life in Him.

While thus passing through the laver of regeneration, the records of Holy Scripture, become of inestimable value to the *seeking soul*; for there, are to be found related, the experiences and declarations of many, who have before trod the path to glory, and to the eternal inheritance of the saints in light; and having been "given by the inspiration of God, [they], are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."* As these answer to the experiences of the mind engaged in the like Christian warfare, they afford to it much encouragement. But above all price, are the accounts of the sufferings and conflicts of Him, "who trod the wine-press alone,"—the Captain of our salvation, who was made perfect through suffering, which He endured for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world; who died, that we might live, and be reconciled to God, through Him, and being reconciled, *saved by His life*, and being saved, made to rejoice in the hope of eternal life through faith that is in Him; for thus to know the true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent, is life eternal. Therefore, the record of these things which has been handed down to us of the present day, through the good providence of God, in Holy Scripture, is indeed of inestimable value, and will continue to be so to every seeking soul, to the end of time.

It was in strict conformity with the evangelical commission, given to the great Apostle of the Gentiles, that the early preachers of the Society of Friends (having themselves first received their call and qualification for the work, from the same Divine power and authority inwardly revealed), laboured "to open the eyes" of the people to whom they were sent, and to invite them to turn from the darkness of their fallen condition by nature, to the light of Christ, within them; and thus, their preaching was made manifest according to the experience of the blessed Apostle, "to every man's conscience;" and it was by the effectual "working" of the same precious influence, that they were enabled to turn the bent and inclinations of their hearts, from the power of Satan unto God.

William Penn, in his account of the rise and progress of the Society, describes what he considers to be their funda-

* 2d Tim. iii., 16, 17.

mental principle, viz., "the light of Christ within, as God's gift for man's salvation,"—which, he says, is the root of the goodly tree of doctrines that grew and branched out from it." The first of these doctrines which he mentions, is, "Repentance from dead works, to serve the living God," which comprehends these operations:—

"First,—a sight of sin; secondly,—a sense and godly sorrow for sin; thirdly,—an amendment for the time to come. This was the repentance they preached and pressed, and a natural result from the principle they turned all people unto. For of *light* came sight, and of sight, came sense and sorrow; and of sense and sorrow, came amendment of life. Which doctrine of repentance leads to justification; that is, forgiveness of sins that are past, through Christ, the alone propitiation; and the sanctification or purgation of the soul from the defiling nature and habits of sin present, by the spirit of Christ in the soul: which is justification in the *complete* sense of the word; comprehending both justification from the guilt of sins that are past, as if they had never been committed, through the love and mercy of God, in Christ Jesus; and the creatures being made *inwardly just*, through the cleansing and sanctifying power of Christ, revealed in the soul, which is commonly called sanctification; but none can come to know him to be *their* sacrifice, who reject him as their sanctifier; the end of his coming being to save his people from the nature and defilement of sin; and, therefore, they that resist his light and spirit, make his coming and offering of none-effect to them."* "Theory and practice (the same author remarks), speculation and enjoyment,—words and life, are two things."

"Oh! it is the *penitent*, the reformed, the lowly, the watchful, the self-denying and holy soul, that is the Christian! and that frame is the fruit and work of the Spirit; which is the life of Jesus, whose life, though hid in the fulness of it, in God the Father, is shed abroad in the hearts of them that truly believe, according to their capacity. Oh! that people did but know this to cleanse them, to circumcise them, to quicken them, and to make them new creatures indeed!—re-created, or regenerated after Christ Jesus, unto good works, that they might live to God, and not to themselves; and offer up living prayers and living praises, to the living God, through his own living Spirit, in which, he is only, to be worshipped in this gospel day."†

But the temptation that the serpent presented to our first parents, "in the day that ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil,"‡ has prevailed in a greater or less degree, with many of their descendants to the present day; the desire of knowledge, the desire to be accounted *great and eminent*, in which, the corrupt nature of man, is so prone to indulge,—is so much opposed to the humble walk of the Christian, that we need not be surprised at the declaration of the Apostle, "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are call-

* W. Penn's Rise and Progress.—Works, 3d Edit., p. 218.

† W. Penn, Works, p. 226. ‡ Gen. iii., 5.

ed, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the *power* of God, and the *wisdom* of God."*

The Pelagians and semi-Pelagians of the fifth century, are examples of this proneness to self exaltation; their errors are thus briefly described by R. Barclay:—"The Pelagians, ascribing all to man's will and nature, denied man to have any seed of sin conveyed to him from Adam; and the Semi-Pelagians, making grace following upon man's merit, or right improving of his nature."†

But of the doctrines held and propagated by the early Friends, he thus writes:—"First,—That God, who out of his infinite love, sent his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the world, who tasted death for every man, hath given to every man, whether Jew or Gentile, Turk or Scythian, Indian or Barbarian, of whatsoever nation, country, or place, a certain day, or time, of visitation, during which day or time, it is possible for them to be saved, and to partake of the fruit of Christ's death.

"Secondly,—That for this end, God hath communicated and given unto every man, a measure of the light of his own Son, a measure of grace, or a measure of the spirit, which the Scripture expresses by several names; as sometimes of the seed of the kingdom;‡—the light that makes all things manifest;||—the word of God;§—a manifestation of the spirit given to profit withal;¶ a talent;***—a little leaven;††—the Gospel preached in every creature.‡‡

"Thirdly,—That God, in and by this light and seed, invites, calls, exhorts, and strives with every man, in order to save him; which, as it is received and not resisted, works the salvation of all, even of those who are ignorant of the death and sufferings of Christ, and of Adam's fall; both by bringing them to a sense of their misery, and to be sharers in the sufferings of Christ inwardly, and by making them partakers of his resurrection, in becoming holy, pure, and righteous, and recovered out of their sins. By which, also, are saved they that have the knowledge of Christ, outwardly; in that it opens their understanding rightly to use and apply the things delivered in the Scriptures, and to receive the saving use of them; but that this may be resisted and rejected in both, in which, then God is said to be resisted and pressed down, and Christ to be again crucified, and put to open shame among

* 1st Cor. xxiv., 24.

† Barclay's Apology, Prop. 5 & 6, § 9.

‡ Matt. xiii., 18, 19.

|| Eph. v., 13.

‡‡ Coloss. i., 23. It is remarkable that these are the synonyma, on which John Eliot and R. Ball ground their charge against R. Barclay, that he had derived his doctrines from the Heathen Philosophers.

§ Rom. x., 17.

¶ 1st Cor. xii., 7.

*** Matt. xxv., 15.

†† Matt. xiii., 33.

men. And to those who thus resist and refuse Him, He becomes their condemnation."*

R. Barclay proceeds to sum up the consequences of this doctrine, from which the following extracts are here inserted:—

"First, then, according to this doctrine, the mercy of God is excellently well exhibited; in that none are necessarily shut out from salvation: and His justice is demonstrated, in that he condemns none, but such, to whom he really made offer of salvation, affording them the means necessary thereto.

"Secondly, this doctrine, if well weighed, will be found to be the foundation of Christianity, salvation, and assurance.

"Thirdly, it agrees and answers with the whole tenor of the Gospel promises and threats, and with the nature of the ministry of Christ; according to which, the gospel, salvation, and repentance, are commanded to be preached to every creature, without respect of nations, kindred, families, or tongues.

"Fourthly, it magnifies and commends *the merits* of Christ's death, in that it not only accounts them *sufficient to save all*, but declares them to be brought so nigh unto all, as thereby to be put in the nearest capacity of salvation.

"Fifthly, it exalts above all the grace of God, to which it attributeth all good, even the *least and smallest* actions that are so, ascribing thereto not only the *first beginnings and motions of good*, but also the whole *conversion and salvation of the soul*.

"Sixthly, it contradicts, overturns, and enervates the false doctrine of the Pelagians, Semi-Pelagians, Socinians, and others, who exalt *the light of nature, the liberty of man's will*, in that it wholly excludes the natural man from having any place or portion in his own salvation, by any acting, moving, or working of his own, until he be first quickened, raised up, and actuated by God's spirit.

"Seventhly, as it makes the whole salvation of man, solely and alone to *depend upon God*, so it makes his condemnation wholly and in every respect, to be *of himself*, in that he refused and resisted somewhat, that from God wrestled and strove in his heart, and forces him to acknowledge God's just judgement in rejecting him, and forsaking him.

"Eighthly, it takes away all grounds of despair, in that it gives every one ground of hope and *certain assurance* that they may be saved, neither doth it feed any in security, in that none are certain how soon their day may expire: therefore, it is a constant excitement and provocation and lively encouragement to every man to forsake evil, and close with that which is good.

"Ninthly, it wonderfully commends as well the certainty of the Christian religion among Infidels, as it manifests its own verity to all, in that it is confirmed and established by the experiences of all men: seeing there was never yet a man found in any place of the earth, however barbarous and wild, but hath acknowledged, that at some time or other, less or more, he hath found somewhat in his heart, reproving him for something evil, which he hath done, threatening a certain horror if he continued in them; as also promising and communicating a certain *peace and sweetness* as he hath given way to it, and not resisted."*

* Barclay's Apology, Prop. 5 and 6, § xi.

The fact that all men, even the unbelieving world, are re-proved of sin by the spirit of truth, agreeably to the promise of the Saviour ; and that "because" they believe not in Him, is confirmed by the testimony of the missionaries in the east. The doctrine that the law is written in the hearts of all men, is *assumed* by that much-esteemed and lamented missionary, the late Dr. Marshman, in his *Catechism*, which is evidently written for the use of the natives.

As it was with a view to contrast the doctrines of Friends, with the errors of the Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians, that the preceding extracts from Barclay's *Apology* have been made, —so under the apprehension, that errors partaking much of the leaven of Pelagianism, or Semi-Pelagianism prevail to a far greater extent among professors than some may be aware of, it may perhaps be useful to attempt the investigation of the subject to a further extent than R. Barclay appears to have thought it needful.

The subject is further developed by Milner, in his *History of the Church*, and his authority, it is proposed to follow, in the prosecution of this enquiry. He thus introduces the account of the Pelagian controversy :

"It is the part of an intelligent agent to chuse the *fittest season* for the execution of arduous enterprises, on the introduction of important innovations. This rule we may safely conclude, is observed by Satan, in all his attempts against the Church of Christ. While the *belief and experience of Divine influences* were strong and vigorous in Christian Societies, it was in vain for him to attempt to persuade men that such influences were of no necessity or value ; he could do no more than reduce them to counterfeit, abuse, or misapply them."

"But now that the holy influence of the Spirit of God was generally damped by superstition, or quenched by licentiousness, Satan felt himself emboldened to erect a new heresy, which should pretend to the height of purity, supported by mere human nature, exclusive of the operations of Divine grace, altogether. This was Pelagianism, and as the evil now entered the Church for the first time, and in a *greater or less degree, has continued to this day*, as it is directly subversive of Christianity itself, and as it introduced a controversy, not trivial and frivolous like many others, but of *unspeakable importance*,—it eminently falls within the plan of this history, to state the circumstances and consequences with perspicuity."

"Augustine, of Hippo, had been trained up under the Lord's wholesome discipline, by an extraordinary conversion."—"Thus did the all-wise God, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working, secretly stir up a scourge for Pelagius, against the time that he should make his appearance ; and his heresy, was eventually, one grand means of introducing juster views of Gospel grace, than had for a long time obtained in the Church, and of reviving Christian Truth, humility, and piety."

"Pelagius," it appears, "was born in Britain, and was, in his own time, called Brito. His companion, Coelestius, was an Irishman."—"They were both laymen, the former, by profession a Monk, who, as far as appears, always maintained a character of fair and decent morals,

In the heat of contention, there were who denied this; but it is admitted by Augustine with his usual candour; and we might have been certain of it, independently of his authority, because otherwise it would have been impossible for him ever to have become a person of lasting reputation in the *religious* world. He appears to have travelled from monastery to monastery, through various parts of the empire. His heretical opinions did not appear till he was far advanced in life; before that time, Augustine owns (though he speaks by hear-say) his *reputation* for serious piety, to have been great in the Christian world, and those who know the difference between holiness and mere morality, will not be surprised at this."

"His first writings were, an Epistle to Paulinus of Nola, and other little works, in which his erroneous views of grace, were so artfully expressed, and so *guarded with cautious turns*, that Augustine owns he was almost deceived by them. But when he saw his other writings of a *later* date, he discerned that he might artfully *own* the word grace, and by retaining the term, break the force of prejudice, and avoid offence, and yet conceal his meaning under a general ambiguity."

"For, by a dexterity, very common with heretics, Pelagius, while he laid open to *his converts*, the whole mystery of his doctrine, imparted only so much to others, as might be more calculated to ensnare their affections, than to inform them of his real opinions. He used to deliver his views under the modest appearance of queries stated against the doctrines of the Church, and those, as *not* invented by himself, but by others. The effect of poisoning the minds of men, was, however, perhaps more powerfully produced by this, than it would have been by a more direct and positive method. To this he added another artifice; he insinuated himself into the favour of women of some rank, of *weak minds*, and unacquainted with the Spirit of the gospel, though professing religion; and by their means, he diffused his tenets with much success. Cœlestius, more open and daring in speech, pursued a method not so replete with deceit, and was therefore exposed to detection, more easily than his master."

Milner remarks further on, in allusion to the conduct of Pelagius himself,—

"How much more respectable would it be to the character of many like Pelagius, would they *at once own* what they are, and make no pretensions to the doctrines of grace! But this sincerity would not so effectually serve the cause of Satan in the world."

"Pelagius, using the same methods, viz., which Cœlestius did, (in attempting to deceive the Bishop of Rome) wrote to Innocent, with whose death he was unacquainted; some fragments of his letters are preserved by Augustine. A sample of them is as follows:—'Lo, let this epistle clear me before you, in which I say that we have free will to sin, and not to sin, which in all good works is always helped by Divine aid.' 'And this power, we say, is in all in general, in Christians, in Jews, and Gentiles. In all there is free-will equally by nature, but in Christians (Believers) alone, it is *helped by Grace*. In those, there is a good condition, naked and unarmed, in these, who belong to Christ, it is fortified by His assistance. Persons, therefore, are to be condemned, who, when they have free-will, by which they might *come to faith*, and obtain the grace of God, abuse their liberty; but those are to be rewarded, who, using a right free will, obtain the favour of God and keep his commands.'

"He adds more to the same purpose, never once, either admitting the doctrine of original sin, or *defining* what he means by *Divine assistance*, which with him *may* mean no more than the benefit of eternal salvation, or the preservation of our natural powers. Had he once expressly declared that he did *not* believe any *real* influence of Divine grace on the mind *inclining* it to what is good, which he knew the Christian world before his time believed, and which if he himself had believed he would have *expressed*; there would have been an honesty in his heretical pravity which would have entitled his character to a greater degree of respect. As the case stands, and as he must have known that his opponent used the terms grace and Divine assistance in a quite different sense from that in which he used them, he appears, by his own words, to have been an insincere disputant."

"If Satan cannot *gain his point entirely* in aspersing the grace of God, he will be content to *do it in part*. And this, for the trial of men's sincerity, was unhappily the case in regard to this present controversy. Pure Pelagianism itself was lost, at least for many ages, nor did any man dare, for a long series of years, to revive it. The works of Augustine were so agreeable to the Scriptures, that while they were regarded as the sole standard of Christian authority, a doctrine which set aside the necessity of grace *altogether*, would gain no hearing in the Church. And in the western world, such an addition of light was obtained as no doubt proved highly serviceable to advance the kingdom of Christ.

"But tares were sown: Semi-Pelagianism arose and maintained itself among many, and *continues* to this day the admired system of all those who seek to unite the arts of secular greatness with some regard for Christian orthodoxy. Its language is, that though man cannot *persevere* in virtue, without Divine grace, yet he can turn himself to God. Vitalis of Carthage, seems to have been the beginner, who taught that our obedience to the gospel was no otherwise the effect of grace than that men *cannot believe*, except the word be *preached* to them. Thus external revelation was put in the room of the secret effectual energy of the Holy Spirit. The Pelagians, who had lost their first ground, retreated hither, and maintained that grace was given according to that merit of men which they showed in attending to the word and prayer."†

Again, the language of Milner is,—

"And few writers have been equal to him [*i. e.* Augustine] in describing the internal conflict of flesh and spirit, mysterious, but certain; ignorantly confounded by philosophers with the conflict between reason and passion, misrepresented by the profane as enthusiastic. He describes this in a manner *unknown* to any but those who have felt it; and the Pelagian pretensions to perfection, oblige him to say more than otherwise would be needful, to prove that the most humble and the most holy have, through life, to combat with indwelling sin."^{*}

This opinion of Augustine, that the most humble and the most holy have, through life, to combat with indwelling sin, seems to have occasioned Robert Barclay to remark, that in his opposition to the errors of the Pelagians, and the Semi-Pelagians, he inclined to the other extreme; and also, that "Luther and others, finding among other errors, the strange expressions used by some of the Popish scholastics, concern-

^{*} Milner, *Hist. of the Church*, Cent. v., ch. iii.

† *Ib.* chap. ix.

ing free will, and how much the tendency of their principles is to exalt human nature, and to lessen God's grace, having all those sayings of Augustine for a pattern, through the like mistake, ran upon the same extreme."*

But if this opinion of these Reformers were true, where would be the victory of the Saints? "For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith; who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God;"† but where is the faith of those that do not believe in the power of the Son of God,—the Saviour, to take away sin?—and where is the victory that never overcometh?—The Apostle Paul saith, "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."‡

It is true that this victory is not to be obtained without conflict, as every experienced Christian knows; even Jesus was tempted like as we are, "yet without sin;" and the holy Apostle had to endure severe conflicts, but was supported by the Divine assurance, "my grace is sufficient for thee,—for my strength is made perfect in weakness."§ It is under the banner of an almighty Saviour that the Christian fights. "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty, *through God*, to the pulling down of strong holds), casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.¶ But some may, in words at least, seem to acknowledge the power of the Saviour, who yet, faithlessly (for all men have not faith)¶ deny that "this is the will of God, even your sanctification;" or that it is possible that any should "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God;"***—thus doubting whether victory can ever be obtained on this side the grave.

The necessity of so labouring in the Lord's vineyard under the guidance of the Divine Master, that all the noxious weeds of our corrupt nature may be rooted up from the ground of the heart, that there may be room for the precious plant of renown to grow and bring forth fruit to the praise of the great Husbandman,—that victory may be known over all that is offensive in His sight,—is very evident from all the requisitions and promises contained in Holy Scripture; and particularly from those addressed to the seven churches of Asia, as contained in the second and third chapters of Revelations,

* Barc. Apol., Prop. v. and vi., § 9. § 2d Cor. x., 4, 5.

† 1st John v., 5.

‡ 1st Cor. xv., 56, 57.

§ 2d Cor. xii., 9.

¶ 1st Thess. iv., 3.

** Col. iv., 12.

It is very remarkable that the exhortation to each of the seven churches, concludes with gracious promises to those that overcome. And it is said, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; I will be his God, and he shall be my son."† But awful judgments are denounced against a different class, among whom are "the fearful and unbelieving;"‡ these, cannot inherit the promises, but are classed with those who work all sorts of wickedness; as Christ said to the unbelieving Jews, "where I am, thither ye cannot come."§

We may now briefly examine the pretensions of those who, having seceded from the Society of Friends, in this country, seem to flatter themselves, that they have discovered an easier way to the kingdom, than by the strait gate and narrow way,—the way of the cross; but it would be well for those who are thus persuading themselves, to attend to the exhortation, and the subsequent awful declaration of Christ, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."§ The necessity of striving to enter in, is very evident, but it is a mournful consideration, that even of those who do "strive,"—who "do seek to enter in," there are many who are not able to accomplish their desires; and doubtless it is, because they seek "amiss;" they may even be able to say, "We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets;"—but these favours, if ill requited, will only be found to add to the sentence of condemnation, of—"Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity."¶

It is difficult to collect from the writings of the Seceders, what are their real opinions on the most momentous subject of religion. It is true they appear to be generally united in their hatred of the doctrines held by the Society of Friends, and considered by them, most essential to true holiness;—they are also eminent in their occupation of "the seat of the scornful,"¶ but "a scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not."** However, their opinions seem to consist of an attempted mixture of Semi-Pelagianism and Calvinistic error; neglecting the truths which are to be found in the writings of Augustine and Calvin, they seem most to admire their mistakes and errors.

* Rev. xxi. 6, 7.

† Rev. xxi. 8.

‡ John vii. 34.

§ Luke xiii. 24.

§ Luke xiii. 27.

¶ Ps. i. 1.

** Prov. xiv. 6.

Laying their foundation, with the Semi-Pelagians in their disbelief in any thing more than an external revelation of the truths of the Gospel, they stumble on the mountain of self-sufficiency, and of an impenetrable unbelief in "That which was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."* With Augustine and Calvin, they hold the opinion that it is impossible to be made free from the pollution and prevalence of indwelling sin, during the term of the natural life; that even the most humble and most holy never experience deliverance on this side the grave.

Of their Semi-Pelagianism, the following quotations from their writings afford abundant proof:—

"Or if we flatter ourselves that we have the knowledge of the will of God, independently of the written revelation, by which it hath pleased Him to convey it, we lay ourselves open to the delusion of the Devil, who, in the guise of an Angel of light, may then readily prevail upon us to receive, as the Truth of God, whatever suggestions most comport with our particular bent of mind."†

"The true source of instruction to the Apostles was immediate, except as regards the Old Testament.—But to us it is mediate.‡

"Those who contend for the supreme authority of spiritual influence in the minds of Christians, say "that which gave forth the Scriptures must be superior to the Scriptures." Now in strictness no one can deny this position: but do these persons forget that it is not the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures which are placed in competition,—but the miraculously attested revelation of truth contained in the Scriptures, and individual impressions on the minds of fallible men."§

Here, R. Ball begs the question: he assumes that the infallible Spirit of God does not communicate Divine Truth to the minds of men; and what is this, but to oppose his own unbelief to the testimony of Scripture?

"From the earliest age, then, the word has been revealed to a few, to be communicated to the many."§ "If, then, the doctrine of Apostles and Prophets is that upon which, and upon which only, all true believers rest their faith (Jesus Christ himself, as the rock of ages, supporting the whole,) it is clear that inward and immediate revelation, as both Friends and the Seceders from them understand it, is an utter fallacy, and to build faith, upon what is imagined to be inwardly revealed, is nothing better than a delusion."¶

"From Barclay's explanation of "the seed," may be clearly understood what is meant by it in George Fox's Journal, where it is very frequently spoken of and is not perhaps defined in such a manner as to give a cursory reader, much, if any, notion of what he really means by it. For instance, at page 266, we find as follows: I was moved by the power and spirit of the Lord, to open unto them the promise of God that it was made to the seed, not to seeds, as many, but to one, which was Christ; and that all people, both male and female, should feel the seed in them, which was heir of the promise, that so, all might witness Christ in them, the

* John i., 9.

† Beacon, p. 145-6.

‡ Beacon, p. 147-8.

§ R. Ball, "Holy Scripture the Test of Truth," p. 30.

¶ J. Wilkinson, "Quakerism Examined," p. 123.

¶ lb. p. xx.

hope of glory; the mystery which had been hid from ages and generations, which was revealed to the Apostles, and is revealed *again now*, after a long night of apostacy. So that all might come up into this seed Christ Jesus,—walk in it, and sit down together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, who was the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, the Rock of Ages; and is our foundation now." The latter part of this extract might, at first sight, appear to comprehend what is spoken of Ephesians ii., 19, 22. "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens of the Saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself, being the chief corner stone; *in whom*, all the building fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also, are builded together, for an habitation of God *through the Spirit*." But a very different thing from this, is meant. George Fox means, that independently of any thing that has been revealed through Apostles and Prophets, all persons have Christ within them as a seed, which they are to feel as a foundation, and upon this feeling (rather upon this foundation), without reference to any outward revelation, they are to build; and, in so doing, they will build upon the same foundation as the Prophets and Apostles built upon; which view of the subject renders the doctrine of the Apostle (Ephes. ii. 19, 22) completely nugatory, and consequently destroyed the whole plan of the gospel; which destruction is a necessary result of the doctrine of inward and immediate revelation, as it is held by Friends.*

"Jesus Christ, then, is understood to be the rock which supports Apostles and Prophets, and all other Believers; but these last, not only rest on the Lord Jesus, but on the Apostles and Prophets."—"It is very clear, then, from all this, we are to understand, that it was the Spirit of Christ in the Prophets, that did testify beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow (1st Peter i. 2)."

It was indeed the Spirit of Truth, the seed, the heir of the promises of God, in the ancient Prophets, that enabled them to testify beforehand of Christ: but this blessed influence was vouchsafed in a more extraordinary manner to the Apostles and Prophets (or preachers) of the times in which the Apostles wrote; and it is by the same Divine assistance and influence, that the prophets or preachers of the present day, are enabled to convey saving truth to the hearts and consciences of their hearers:—but to proceed with a further extract,—

"I tell you, and I tell you plainly, that the gospel we have to preach, is not an inward and immediate revelation,—it is an *outward* revelation; for the revelation which God has, in all ages, been pleased to make known, has been communicated to a few, for the benefit of the many."†

These extracts, taken from the writings of Seceders from the Society of Friends, in this country, sufficiently manifest the Semi-Pelagianism of their opinions. We may, therefore, X Christ, in *other ages* was not made known unto the

* J. Wilkinson, "Quakerism Examined," p. 144—6.

† Ib. p. 149.

† Ib. p. 425.

X This line belongs to the bottom of the next page.

now proceed to contrast their doctrines with the testimonies of Holy Scripture.

The passage of Scripture that appears to be most relied upon by the Seceders, in support of their opinion, is, Eph. ii., 19, 22,* and their confidence rests almost exclusively on their misapprehension respecting the application of a single word used by the Apostle Paul, in the passage referred to: it was not the *ancient prophets* of whom the Apostle was writing, but the preachers of the Gospel of his own time.

It has been justly remarked, it is believed by "one of themselves, even a prophet of their own," and the circumstance has been noticed by others, that, however convenient for reference, the division of the Scriptures into chapter and verse may be, yet it has often the effect of so interrupting the thread of the discourse in which the sacred writer is engaged, as to occasion the incautious reader to fail in his endeavour to obtain the true meaning of the passage;—if this be the case with those who are sincerely desirous of obtaining instruction from the perusal of the sacred volume, how much more is this likely to happen to those who are willing to strain the meaning of a text, in support of their erroneous views: and in the instance of the class of writers, whose opinions we are examining, this consequence seems to have followed their study of the Scriptures, as a careful inspection of the passage so much relied upon by the Seceders, will clearly show.

If the passage of Scripture, Ephes. II., III., be taken consecutively, to the summing up of the Apostle's argument, it will stand as follows:—"For through Him [Christ] we *both* have access, by one spirit, unto the Father. Now, *therefore*, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom, all the building fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord; *in whom, ye also are* builded for an habitation of God, through the spirit. For this cause, I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ, for you Gentiles (if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which is given me to you-ward, how that by revelation, he made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote afore, in a few words, whereby, when ye read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of

* See J. Wilkinson's "*Quakerism Examined*."—So confident does he seem that this passage not only supports his views, but that it incontrovertibly settles the question at issue, that he refers to it not less than *twenty* times in the course of his work: viz., at pages xx., 28, 29, 45, 64, 90, 103, 104, 145, 146, 147, 149, 151, 152, 200, 222, 244, 254, 257, 318, 385, 425, 460, where references are made in support of his sophistical reasonings, and often afford the opportunity for the most bitter revilings.

sons of men as it is now revealed unto his holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit, that the Gentiles should be *fellow heirs*, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the Gospel.*

That by the word Prophets, the Apostle meant the preachers of his own time, sufficiently appears from chap. iii., 5, where he repeats the words Apostles and Prophets, and which cannot possibly be understood to mean the ancient Prophets. —“Which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is *now revealed* unto the holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit.” The language just quoted, is so precise, that it seems impossible to alter the construction here insisted upon; and what was it that was revealed to the Prophets or Preachers, together with the Apostles?—Surely, nothing less than that which the Apostle [v. 4] calls his “knowledge in the mystery of Christ!” and what was that mystery of Christ, so highly prized by the Apostle, but “that the Gentiles should be *fellow heirs*, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the Gospel, whereof I, Paul, was made a minister, by the effectual working of his power?”

The figure used [Eph. ii., 20] where the church is compared to a building,—and that [iii., 6] where it is compared to the human body, appear to be of like import in the Apostle’s language: but that [iii., 6] seems to be the most precise, and the idea of equal privileges so clearly expressed, and twice repeated in the term “*fellow heirs*,” and in that of the “*same body*,” seems to admit of no different construction.—These were exceeding great and precious privileges, which were asserted by Paul to belong to the Gentile Churches; and in that beautiful prayer, with which the chapter concludes, he petitions “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend *with* all saints, what is the breadth and length, and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; that *ye might be filled* with all the fulness of God.”† It is, indeed, wonderful, with what earnestness the Apostle of the Gentiles, asserts the spiritual privileges of their churches, even of those “who had not seen his face in the flesh,” as well as of those who had been converted by his ministry, “desiring that [they] might come behind in no gift.”‡

Paley was of opinion that the epistle addressed in our Bible to the Ephesians, was in reality the epistle mentioned in Col-

* Eph. ii, 18.—iii., 6.

† Eph. iii., 17, 19.

‡ Paley’s remarks on this subject, confirm the views here maintained:—“Withal, praying also for us, that God would open to us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds.” What

lossians, as having been sent to Laodicea; but however that may be, throughout both epistles, the intention of the Apostle is, evidently to assert the gospel privileges of the Gentile Churches. If Paley be right in his conjecture (and there exists considerable internal evidence to support his opinion), and, indeed, whether or not, it does not seem to be an unfair inference, to conclude that the object of Paul, in uniting the Prophets with the Apostles, in the passages referred to, might be to assure the believers who had not been converted by the ministry of an Apostle (as it is clear that those at Colosse had not, but by that of the ordinary prophets or preachers), that they need not therefore be apprehensive, that on this account they should be behind others, in any gospel privilege? and hence, also, we may infer, that the Apostle in his uniting the other preachers of the gospel with himself, in asserting their joint claims to immediate revelation, as exceeding that of the ancient Prophets, and in his asserting, also, that it was such as had not been made known in other ages, to the sons of men, had also, the object in view, of supporting the authority and of asserting the efficiency of all rightly qualified gospel Ministers.

How it has happened, then, it is difficult to perceive, that this passage (Eph. ii.) has been chosen to support the Semi-Pelagian opinion, that—"the gospel is not an inward and immediate revelation," but that it is an "outward revelation—for the revelation which God has in all ages been pleased to make known, has been communicated to a few, for the benefit of the many;"† contradicting, as it does, almost in express terms, the language and declarations of the Apostle, to whom the writer refers.

That the Gospel is an immediate and spiritual dispensation of the goodness and grace of God, freely communicated to the soul of man, for his recovery from his lost condition consequent on the fall, is evident from the declarations and gracious promises of the Saviour himself, in that memorable discourse, which he addressed to his immediate followers, a little before he suffered, as contained in the Gospel of John, chap. xiv., xv., xvi. wherein He describes the different manifestations and operations of the one blessed Spirit, according to the different states and varied conditions of mankind.

that "mystery of Christ" was, the Epistle to the Ephesians distinctly informs us:—"whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the *mystery of Christ*, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy Apostles and Prophets by the spirit, *that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel*," This, therefore, was the confession for which he declares himself in bonds.—*Paley's Horæ Paulinæ, chap. on Colossians, page 250.*

Note.—The words in italics, are so printed in the text of Paley's work.

† Wilkineon, p. 425.

"If ye love me, keep my commandments; and I will pray the Father, and he shall send you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you."* Thus, those who evince their knowledge and their love of the Redeemer by their obedience in keeping his commandments, are made to experience the fulfilling of the declaration, that he (the comforter) dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.**

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name; he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."†

Here is a promise, that the Apostles shall be taught *all things* by the Holy Ghost; and not only so, but through the same blessed influence, they shall have brought to their remembrance, whatsoever the Lord Jesus had said unto them. Thus qualified, to them, the language was applicable, "Therefore, every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of Heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringing forth out of his treasure, things *new* and *old*."|| By their being thus instructed, we have an assurance of the truth of the Gospels, and of their other writings, superior to that of mere human testimony; and not only their writings, but their preaching would carry with it an authority, which no merely human acquirements can give. The times of the Apostles, then, were surely highly privileged days;—but, are we left destitute? We have the Scriptures, it is true,—those precious depositories of the truths promulgated in ancient times; but, with regard to the ministry, if we have no other, than that of a humanly ordained ministry, or at most, that of Prophets, or Preachers who prophecy in the Lord's "name," when He "sent them not,"* we are yet in a very deplorable condition. But "thanks be unto God, for his unspeakable gift,"† it is not so;—the Church is not yet destitute;—there are yet, livingly qualified Ministers, who are concerned to prophecy "according to the proportion" of that "living faith" with which they may be endued by their Divine Master;‡ but these must abide in Him, or they will be cast forth, as a branch that is withered.

"Abide in me, and I in you; as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no *more can ye*, except ye *abide in me*. I am the vine—ye are the branches, he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringing forth much fruit, for *without me, ye can do nothing*. If a man *abide not in me*, he is *cast forth* as a branch and *is withered*, and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."** It may, perhaps, be objected by some, that the

* John xiv. 16, 17.

† John xiv. 26.

‡ Matt. xiii. 52.

|| Jer. xiv. 16.

§ 2d Cor. ix. 16.

¶ Rom. xii. 6.

** John xv. 4, 6

promises quoted (John xiv.) apply exclusively to the Apostles to whom they were specially addressed ; but here there seems no possibility of evasion ; the declaration is clear ; and the application is general, and it is given both positively and negatively, "*he that abideth in me,*" &c.—and "*If a man abide not in me,*" &c., "*he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered,*" &c., how solemn the warning, then, to those who place their whole dependence upon their own "private interpretation" of Scripture ; since it is evident that those who do not derive their nourishment immediately from the living vine will be cast forth, as a branch that is withered.

Those who have their sole dependence on Christ, though all outward helps should be withdrawn, "for whether there be prophecies, they shall fail ; whether there be tongues, they shall cease ; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away,"*—yet, with the Prophet, may these say, "although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine ;—the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no more herd in the stall ; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation, (because, as saith another Prophet) "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O, God, beside thee, what He hath prepared for *him that waiteth for him.*"†

Again,—“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me ; and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.”‡ This relates exclusively to the ministry of the Word, and describes in clear and precise terms, both the teaching of the Holy Spirit that is sent by Christ and proceedeth from the Father, and that of the apostles. To testify, and to bear witness, are synonymous terms, and here it is expressly said, that the Holy Spirit shall testify of Christ the Redeemer. The teaching of the apostles is placed in subordination to, and is distinguished from, the teaching of the Spirit : ye also shall bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.” Language would fail to express in clearer terms, the doctrine always held and promulgated by the Society of Friends, on this subject ; here is “no apparent twist,”§ nor does it seem possible to evade the force of the distinction here described by Christ himself, between the *immediate* teaching of his Spirit, and that of the apostles, both were promised to the

* 1st. Cor. xiii. 8.

† 1. J. Wilkinson.

‡ Isa. liv., 4.

§ John xv., 26.

Church, and may the promise be accepted in all its fulness and in all the benignity of the Divine purpose, "the purpose of his own" gracious "will!"

Again;—"Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send him unto you, and when He is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment; of sin, *because* they believe not in me: of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more: of judgment, because the Prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot *bear them* now; howbeit, when He the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all Truth: for He shall not speak of himself but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak, and He *will* show you things to come."*

Here, the ministry of the Holy Spirit is again promised, but to the Apostles the promises are extended to things which they could not *then bear* to have told unto them, and consequently that they could not then have known; and also that the same Holy Teacher should show them things to come." This proves the gradual developement of Divine Truth, even on the minds of believers, according to their several growths and capacities to receive it, according to that saying of the Apostle, "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith, which should afterwards be revealed."† But it is expressly said that He should reprove the world of sin, "*because*" saith Christ, "they believe not in me;" thus, the unrighteous world, is not left without a witness, but is, according to this testimony visited by this searching influence, which reproves of sin, and that "*because*" of its unbelief. If, then, even unbelievers, through this benign influence, have *their sins* manifested unto them, and "that which doth make manifest is light;" and not only so, but if the promise be added, that the Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, shall also testify of Christ the Redeemer, then surely the gift of his grace is universal, none being excluded. It is indeed, therefore, an universal saving light, which, if loved and obeyed, will lead into all truth necessary for salvation.

It seems probable that the beloved Disciple had this discourse of his Divine Master brought to his remembrance, when, in the introduction to his Gospel he declares that "in Him [Christ] was life, and the life was the light of men; that was the true light, which lighteth every man that com-

* John xvi., 7-13.

† Gal. iii., 23.

eth into the world."* "And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace; for the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."† Nothing surely, but the spirit of blind unbelief, can reject these testimonies to the universality of the mercy and love of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore, let all "take heed," as saith the Apostle, addressing his brethren, "lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief" in "departing from the living God,"‡ who, in these last days hath spoken unto us by his Son, and who upholdeth all things by the word of his power."||

But man, by his natural powers, however cultivated, and however his mind be stored with the most complete and the most critical knowledge of mere human literature, cannot with all his acquirements, comprehend spiritual truths; it continues to be now as formerly, "the world by wisdom knew not God," and hence it is that to many who think they see, the saying is nevertheless applicable, that "the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not."§ It has indeed been asserted, "that as light is the very last thing that a person need be informed of the presence of, if he have eyes to see it; and if he have none, no information of its presence could make him perceive it."¶

It was, no doubt, a persuasion of this sort with which the Pharisees justified themselves, in rejecting the Saviour, "*The Light of the world.*" They trusted in their "own understanding," for the acquirement of the knowledge of Scriptural truth, but wanting the word of the Father to illumine their minds, the Scriptures were received through a vitiated medium, their understandings being corrupted by the *conceit* of their literal knowledge of what had been foretold respecting their Redeemer, and therefore it was, that they could neither recognise nor comprehend him in his humble appearance when *present* with them. When "Jesus said, for judgment I am come into the world that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind."** they scornfully replied, "are we blind also?" †† but they nevertheless could not escape reproof, and "Jesus said unto them," if ye were blind, ye should have *no sin*; but now ye say, ye see, therefore your sin remaineth.†††

It is the humbled soul alone, that can benefit by the tendering visitations of the light of Divine truth; and it is only the creative power of Him, who, in the beginning said "Let there be light, and there was light," which can illumine the

* John i., 4, 9.

|| Heb. i., 2, 3.

** John ix., 39.

† John i., 16, 17.

§ John i., 5.

¶† John ix., 40.

‡ Heb. iii., 12.

¶ Wilkinsons Quak. Examined.

‡† John ix., 41.

darkness of our fallen nature. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us."* Again,—“God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers, by the Prophets, hath in these last days, spoken unto us by his Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom, also, He made the worlds.”† In both these quotations it is nothing less than the creative power of God which is referred to, as illuminating the soul and dispensing to it the knowledge of saving truth by Jesus Christ, the alone Redeemer—the Alpha and Omega—the first and the last.”‡

The Apostle Paul, when pleading his cause before Agrippa, thus earnestly expostulates; “Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?”§ If the professors of religion had a sufficiently abiding sense of the Divine attributes—of the omnipresence, of the omniscience, and of the omnipotence of God; and if they believed that the soul of man was a spiritual substance, they surely would not think it incredible that the same power, which at the first called man into existence, and who, as all will acknowledge, sustains his natural life—should quicken, renovate, and regenerate his dead or dying *soul*: for God is a spirit, and He is the Father of spirits,”¶ and in “Him, we live and move and have our being.”¶ He is everywhere present; He knows all our need in every exigency; He sees our condition and his power is all-sufficient to rescue us in every difficulty, and it is His power alone which can effect His gracious purposes for the redemption of man.

The language of the Prophet Isaiah, when foretelling of Christ, is “Thus saith God the Lord, he that *created* the Heavens and stretched them out; He that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; He that giveth breath to the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and will give thee for a covenant of the people, for a *light* of the *Gentiles*, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house”** “I will bring the blind by a way they know not,”†† “Hear ye deaf, and look ye blind that ye may see.”‡‡ This was foretold of the ministry of Christ to the Gentiles; and there-

* 2d. Cor. iv., 6, 7.

§ Acts xxvi., 8.

** Isaiah xlii., 5, 7.

† Heb. i., 1, 2.

§ Heb. xii., 9.

†† Ib. 16.

† Rev. i., 2.

¶ Acts xvii., 28.

‡‡ Ib. 18.

fore could not relate exclusively to the working of outward miracles; "I will lead them in paths which they have not known; I will make darkness *light* before them and crooked things straight."* Here again, we have all referred to the creative power of that omnipotent and gracious Being, who made the heavens and the earth.

The miracles of the blessed Jesus had a more extended use than that of conferring a benefit on the immediate objects of his mercy, on whom they were wrought; they were intended also to manifest his power and Godhead; "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in Him."†

There are some of the wonderful works of the Lord Jesus, as they are related by the Evangelists, the full effects of which, even as regards the outward manifestation of his power, may possibly not obtain the attention of the superficial reader; particularly in the instance of those persons who were born blind, and also of those who, through a natural defect of their organs, were deaf and dumb, the miracles did not consist merely in the removal from the blind of the defects which prevented their "perception of light," which, if it had been performed by mere human agency, could not have given immediately, the power so to distinguish objects by sight as to *know* things *that differ*, but like children, they would have had still to learn; neither could the dumb have known the use of the organs of speech; they would also, even like a child, have had yet to learn the language of their native country. But he that had been born blind, at the *bidding* of Christ, went and "washed and came seeing;"‡ and of the deaf and dumb it is said, that when the word was spoken, "Ephphatha," be opened, straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed and he spake plain. And [the beholders] were beyond measure astonished, saying, "He hath done all things well, he maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak."§ But are not the spiritually blind and deaf in as helpless a condition as these were with respect to their bodily organs? "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."§ It is, therefore, true, that merely outward means can never make the spiritually blind sensible of the presence of light, or give him the "power" of perceiving it "if present."

* Isaiah xlii., 16.

|| Mark vii. 34, 36, 37.

† John x., 38.

§ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

‡ John ix., 7.

But there is "One given for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles ; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness from the prison house ;" therefore, " Hear, ye deaf, and look, ye blind, that ye may see ;"—look singly to Him, of whom it was said, " Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men ; yea, for the *rebellious* also, that the Lord God might *dwell* among them."*

And how are the means described, by which all those great things were to be wrought? " And he [Jesus] said, so is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground ; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should grow and spring up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear, after that, the full corn in the ear."† This seed, when it is sown in the earth (the earthly heart of man) is less than all the seeds that be in the earth ;—"but, He that soweth the good seed, is the son of man"—and "when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs."‡ "Another parable, spake He, unto them ; the kingdom of Heaven, is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."§ Both these parables describe a living operative principle, bestowed on man, by the author of his salvation, for the regeneration of his nature, and are both inward and immediate in their operation. The seed is sown *in the earth*, the earthly heart ; the leaven is hid in the three measures of meal, until the whole partakes of the same heavenly nature. It is thus, that the word principle becomes applicable, because that the seed sown in the earth, communicates the principle of vitality where it did not before exist ; and like the leaven hid in the meal, it imparts to its recipients its own heavenly nature ; and it is thus also, that to those who receive Christ in his inward appearance, that he gives "power to become the sons of God even to them that believe in his name, which are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of *the will of man* but of God."§

It was doubtless in condescension to the weakness of our nature, that in the Scriptures divine truths are often communicated in figurative language, for "no man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the father, he hath declared him ;"¶ and by the immediate teaching of the Holy Spirit, those who are taught of God, have instruction communicated only as they are able to bear

*. Pal. xviii. See also Eph. iii. 8. † Mark iv., 26, 28.

‡ Mark iv., 30, 32. § Matt. xiii., 33. § John i., 12, 13. ¶ John i., 18.

it; even the Apostles were told "I have yet *many things* to say unto you, but ye *cannot* bear them now;" and none ever experienced a growth in grace and in the saving knowledge of the Son of God, but those who submit to this gracious teaching, the teaching of Him "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

The Seceders from the Society of Friends thus attempt a vindication of their opinions:—"The sentiments of Evangelical Friends having been painfully misrepresented on the blessed doctrine of the Holy Spirit, we consider it due to ourselves, to you, and to the Christian Church generally, emphatically to declare our firm and increased *belief* in this doctrine in all its scriptural extent and fulness. Whilst renouncing the notion of an universal *saving inward light*, as utterly *destitute* of a Scriptural foundation, we believe that it is by the *operation* of the Holy Spirit, that man is "convinced of sin," and enabled to believe in, and lay hold of, a Saviour; that the regeneration is the communication of vitality to the soul, which before was dead in trespasses and sins. The first effects of this life are repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ: and by faith *the believer* receives the Holy Spirit of promise, whereby alone he can maintain a walk of faith, and whereby only can all services, whether in the Church or those of a private character, be performed to the glory of God."—"The gift of the Spirit *appears* to be *consequent upon* believing; in whom [Christ] ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also *after that ye believed*, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory."* "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son unto your hearts, crying Abba, Father."†

This exposition of the opinions of the Seceders from the Society of Friends, on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, though emphatically declared, does not contain such a development of their views, as might have been expected from them, or the occasion seemed to require. On the contrary, the reader of Scripture, who accepts the promises according to their plain and obvious meaning, would be likely to conclude that their opinions, as here stated, involved palpable contradictions;—"but they do not mean it so, neither does their heart think so," for they renounce the

* Eph. i. 13.

† Epistle of those styling themselves "Evangelical Friends," dated 5th day of June, 1837.

notion of an universal and saving inward light, while they acknowledge that it is by the operation of the Holy Spirit, that man is "convinced of sin," yet they evade the Scriptural doctrine, that the *world* is reprov'd of sin and that, "*because*" of unbelief; on the contrary, they say that "the gift of the spirit appears to be consequent upon believing;" and they therefore leave their readers to infer, that it is believers only who are convinced of sin. For, though the holy words foretold respecting the Saviour are,—"*thou hast received gifts for men, yea for the rebellious also*" yet this they profess not to know,* and it may be fairly inferred, do not believe. We do not, therefore, charge them with inconsistency, (when thus considering this, their public profession of faith,) with their previously avowed opinions, which are clearly identified with the ancient heresy of the Semi-Palagians; but our controversy with them is, that they do not receive "the blessed doctrine of the influence of the Holy Spirit in all its scriptural extent and fulness." Here, we are fairly at issue with them, and cannot forbear, however painful the consideration, especially as it respects some of them, with whom we have been accustomed "to take sweet counsel together," to declare that in our judgment, their opinions are affected with one of the most dangerous heresies that ever afflicted the Christian Church, inasmuch as its tendency is to keep worshipers in the outward court, the court which is without the temple,† which was to be given to the Gentiles, and was to be *left out* in the measurement; and also tending to prevent their having "boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus; by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated *for us* through the vail, that is to say, his flesh."‡

The passage of Scripture, which they appear mainly to rely upon in support of their opinion, will, if fairly considered, bear no such construction as they attempt to put upon it. Here again their failure is, in part at least, effected by their endeavour to build up a system by taking an insulated passage, without sufficiently regarding the context, which, with a little management, they think has served their purpose. One of these writers|| has printed the word AFTER (in Eph. i., 13) in capital letters; and, in the document before us, the words "*after that ye believed*" are printed in italics; the object evidently being, to place the emphasis in such a manner as to enable them to twist the meaning of the

* See "The Beacon," and R. Ball's Holy Script, the test of truth. J. Wilkinson asserts that there are millions of the human race who have no knowledge whatever of the true God. Quak. Ex. p. 6.

† Rev. xi., 2. ‡ Heb. x., 19, 20. || I. Crewdson, "Beacon," p. 84.

Apostle to their purpose : but the emphasis ought to be on the word sealed ; and if they had referred to the Apostle himself, they might have avoided this error. " But God, who is rich in mercy, *even when we were dead in sin*, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved) and hath *raised* us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."* Here we perceive that the first process in the work of regeneration, is to be *quickened* by grace from the state of death : and what can effect this, but the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, which must necessarily precede a being *sealed* by Christ with the Holy Spirit of promise ? The word *sealed* denotes both here and Rev. vii. the acceptance of the Saints. It does not, therefore, apply to those who, continuing in their sins, are under the reproofs of the Holy Spirit for sin, but to the redeemed " that were under the law," but who, having experienced this Holy influence to guide them into all truth, are thus receiving the " adoption of Sons" which enables them to call God Father.

On the subject of Faith, the seceders say, " We accept the great foundation doctrine of faith, and justification through faith alone."†—" The really awakened sinner, can have no peace but from the *assurance* which the word of God (meaning the Scriptures) *conveys*, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. This is the remedy that God hath provided, and it can only be applied by faith."‡

The terms used in the first extract—" Justification through faith alone," it is believed, have no parallel in the whole Bible, except it be the passage (James ii., 17) " Even so, faith, if it have not works, is dead, being alone."

To the second extract we object, because that it is asserted, that no peace can be conveyed to the awakened sinner, but that which is conveyed to him by the assurance of Scripture. Our assurance is as firm as that of the writer just quoted, " that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin ;" but we are at issue with him on the Semi-Pelagian notion, that this truth can *only* be conveyed to the awakened soul, through an outward medium, or that a true and living faith can only be obtained by an acquaintance with the writings of the Apostles and Prophets ; which notion is in direct contradiction to the testimony of the prophet Jeremiah, confirmed by that of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. " But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their *inward* parts and write it *in* their hearts, and

* Eph. ii., 4, 6. † Epistle of the Seceders. ‡ Quakerism Examined, p. 65.

I will be their God and they shall be my people. And they shall *teach no more* every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them, unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.* Here, the knowledge of Him, whom, to know, is eternal life, is promised to be given through the ministry of an inward teacher, even by the teaching of that law which "is put in the *inward* parts;" and through this means, also, which is independent of any outward teaching, *peace may be known*, for "saith the Lord, I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more." And further,—we fully believe that the Redeemer has, according to his promise, sent the Comforter, even the spirit of truth, who testifies of Christ, and that it is by the acceptance of his testimony alone, that we can receive true, living, and saving faith, and it is on this, the testimony of the spirit of truth, on which the testimony of the Scriptures themselves rest.†

It was by this living Faith that the "elders obtained a good report," before the Scriptures were written,‡ and which enabled Moses to esteem the reproach of Christ, "greater riches than the treasures of Egypt," and by which "he endured, as seeing him who is invisible."

But "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."|| Thus, in a few words, the Apostle describes the only means by which true and saving faith can be obtained: but here, again, the controversy arises, what is meant by

* Jer. xxi., 33, 34.

† Extracted from a work of the pious James Usher, Archbishop of Armagh, entitled, *The Sum and Substance of Christian Religion*.

When he treats on the evidence for the truth of Holy Scripture, he says, "The deadly hatred the Devil, and all wicked men, carry against the Scriptures, to cast them away and destroy them, and the little love that most men do bear unto them, prove them to be of God. For if they were of flesh and blood, then flesh and blood would love them, read them, practice them, and every way regard them more than it doth. For the world loveth its own, as our Saviour Christ saith, John xv., 19, but we (being but carnal and earthly) savour not the things that be of God, as the Apostle Paul saith, 1 Cor. ii., 14. And until the Lord *open* our hearts, and we be *born* again of God's spirit, and become as *new-born* babes, we have no desire unto them, 1 Pet. ii., 2."—Page 8.

He says, with reference to outward testimonies,

"No, besides all these, it is required, that we have the Spirit of God, as well to *open* our eyes to see the light, as to *seal* up fully unto our hearts that truth which we see with our eyes, for the same Holy Spirit that inspired the Scriptures, inclineth the hearts of God's children to believe what is revealed in them, and *inwardly assureth* them, above all *reasons* and *arguments*, that they are the Scriptures of God."—Page 9.

"If an infidel should ask the church, How they are sure that Christ died for them? if they should answer, Because themselves say so, it would be ridiculous, &c."—Page 10.

‡ Heb. xi., 2.

|| Rom. x., 17.

"the word of God?" The writer whose work is at present under notice, asserts that the Scriptures are meant; but it will not be denied that Abraham had true and saving faith; and there exists no evidence to prove that any part of the Scriptures had been written before his time, and even for long after; but they, nevertheless, declare, that "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness, know ye therefore that they which be of faith, the same are the children of Abraham."* It necessarily follows, therefore, that this word of God, which the Apostle considers indispensable, could not be the Scriptures, but the living eternal Word; He that said, "Before Abraham was, I am." It is also said, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not to seeds, as of many; but as of one: and to thy seed, which is Christ; and this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before, of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, *cannot* disannul, that it should make the covenant of non-effect."†

Here we have the means described by which Abraham obtained that precious faith which enabled him to look "for a city which hath *foundations*, whose builder and maker is God."‡ This is the doctrine of the Scriptures of Truth, which no sophistry can ever disannul; for "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness."§ Therefore, the faith of Abraham was obtained by *immediate revelation* of the wisdom, the power, and the will of God,—but, "know ye, therefore, that they that be of faith, the *same* are the children of Abraham."§

We think that these testimonies are conclusive, respecting the origin of true and saving faith; that it may be obtained, and can *only* be obtained by the immediate revelation of the spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, and testifies of Christ.

But if we turn to the history of Abraham, we shall see that the inferences drawn from it, by the apostolic writers, are fully supported by the facts;—and what other result could be expected? for Truth is, in its nature, unchangeable. Their "speech" and their "preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."¶

"Now the Lord had said unto Abraham, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will *shew thee*." "So Abraham

* Gal. iii., 6, 7.

† Gal. iii., 16, 17.

‡ Heb. x., 10.

§ Rom. iv., 3.

§ Gal. iii., 6, 7.

¶ 1. Cor. ii., 4, 5.

departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him."* Here we see that it was by immediate revelation that Abram *received his call* to leave his country and his father's house. "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, fear not, Abram, *I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.*"† Here we have the exhortation presented to Abram immediately from the Lord, *not to fear*, and doubtless the exhortation came with power. "And [yet] Abram said Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless."‡ "And Abram said, behold to me thou hast given no seed: and lo, one born in my house is mine heir."§ This, with the heart that knoweth its own bitterness, is often the discouraging language, whilst under the feeling of those corruptions, which, it may be emphatically said, are born in their own house. They are sighing for the promised seed, to bring them deliverance, which "*seed is Christ.*" But, oh! the condescending goodness and mercy of God; "and behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, this shall not be thine heir:"¶ then follow the gracious promises of enlargement: "And he [Abram] believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness;" and yet again Abram interceded with God. "And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I *know* that I shall inherit it?"|| (meaning the promised land). "And he said, unto him, take me an heifer of three years old, and a turtle dove, and a young pigeon. And he took him all these, and he divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another, but the birds he divided not. And when the fowls came down upon the carcases, Abram drove them away; and when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.** And it came to pass that when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between the pieces."†† It was probably in allusion to this vision and offering of the Patriarch, that Isaiah, when describing the glories of Christ's kingdom, says, in the name of the Lord, "I will not rest until the *righteousness* thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a *lamp* that burneth;"‡‡ as a lamp, that while it *enlightens* the conscience, *burneth up* the "chaff," and the corruptions of our degenerate nature "with unquenchable fire."

But, oh! that any should faint, when under the close and trying dispensations of unerring wisdom; for they are designed for our purification from the defilements of sin.—Though the poor mind, it may be, is pressed down with hea-

* Gen. xii., 4. † Gen. xv., 1. ‡ Gen. v., 2. § Gen. v., 3.
 ¶ Gen. v., 4. || Gen. v., 8. ** Gen. xv., 9, 12. †† Gen. v., 17. ‡‡ Isa. lxii., 1.

viness, through manifold trials, arising either from those conflicts, that will be experienced in the Christian's progress to the heavenly Canaan; or from those dispensations of an outward nature, which often try our faith, by afflicting the soul, with what may be compared to an "horror of great darkness,"—yet there is an omnipotent, if invisible arm underneath, which is able and graciously willing, to sustain the obedient soul in every difficulty,—even the arm of Him who knows our frame and remembers that we are dust, and will not permit us to be tried beyond what we are able to bear; and, therefore, though faith may be very closely tried, there is great cause for encouragement, "for we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence, steadfast unto the end."*

But we may perceive that with the grosser animals which Abram was commanded to surrender, to the operation of the smoking furnace and burning lamp, and which were divided in the midst, which may be understood to represent the more sensual portions of our nature, there was also the turtle dove and young pigeon, which may be compared not unfitly to that which appears more innocent and amiable in human nature, as well as to all creaturely self-righteousness; yet even these were to come under the refining operation. But this is "a path which the vulture's eye hath not seen;"† and yet the truly awakened and converted Christian, who has attained to the faith of Abraham,—that faith which works by love, and purifies the soul, will accept, "in all its fulness," the declaration of the Saviour, "your father, Abraham, rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad."‡

But the faith of Abraham was not that which "being alone, was dead;" the vulture's eye can reach to this;—that unclean bird, which though soaring almost to the clouds [not an unfit emblem of the towering wisdom of man, as regards spiritual things] yet has the power of discerning putrescent bodies on the surface of the earth; but the true faith of the Christian does not stand "in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

It was the want of this living faith which stands "in the power of God," which made the Jews reject the Saviour. Though they had the Scriptures and trusted in them, yet wanting that which can alone render them "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,"|| they rejected the offered mercy of Him, who came to be their Redeemer, and fell under his reproof for their disobedience and unbelief.

* Hebrew iii., 14.

† Job xxviii., 7.

‡ John viii., 56.

|| 2d Tim. iii., 16.

"And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath *born witness* of me; ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape, and ye *have not his word* abiding in you, *for*, whom he hath sent, ye believe not; search the Scriptures, *for in them*, ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they, which testify of me, and ye will not come to me that ye might have life."* Notwithstanding this remonstrance, the Jews, the apostate seed of Abraham, according to the flesh, like some of modern times, could manifest by their conduct that their "whole soul abhorred" the doctrines and "principles" taught by the Redeemer;† thus proving "that there is a path, which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen: the lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it."‡

Yet the encouraging language of the Prophet is, "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not, behold, your God shall come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped."|| "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the *unclean* shall not pass over it; but it shall be for these, the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein." "No lion shall be there"—"And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads, and shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."§ But these promises do not belong to those, who, though they say much respecting their being justified by faith alone, are yet, practically unbelievers, if their faith rest more on the speculative wisdom of man, than on "the power of God."

On entering upon the important subject of Prayer, it may be remarked that if "Charity" or love, be the "bond of perfectness,"¶ without some degree of which, prevailing in men's minds, society could not exist,—and whence, must arise every interchange of benefits and kind offices which we reciprocally receive one from another, and most especially those which spring from Christian Communion,—then, yet more assuredly, unless the love of our Creator and Redeemer be deeply implanted in our hearts, can we have no communion with Him. And if in our natural and civil relations, we are led for assistance and succour to those who are nearest us in affection, and with whom we are also united by the ties of consanguinity, and natural relationship;—if the infant, by

* John v., 32—40.

† J. Wilkinson.

‡ Job xxviii., 7, 8.

|| Isa. xxxv., 4, 5.

§ Ib. 3, 10.

¶ Col. iii., 14.

a natural instinct, clings to the breast of its parent for sustenance and support, not less certainly does every true child of God, seek to its Creator, from whom it has received its being, and to its Redeemer, from whom it has received that newness of life, which is the earnest, and commencement of a happy immortality. Since it is to the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, that we owe all things, if this sentiment be duly impressed upon our minds, and we are truly sensible of our own entire insufficiency and consequently of the need we have of his continual aid and support to conduct us with safety to the haven of rest and peace,—thence, assuredly will arise, the feeling of the necessity for our prayers being continually put up to Him for preservation and support. It was, then, with reference to our need and to the helplessness of our condition, that the injunction was given: "Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is."* "And what I say unto you, I say unto all, watch."† Thus it appears that prayer and supplication, with giving of thanks, is the imperative duty of all.

But, it may be asked,—is every one and at all times, impressed with that filial feeling of love to their heavenly Father,—with that true sense of their own need,—and imbued with that living faith, which gives the assurance, that we shall have the things which we ask for? On the contrary, are there not many, who, if they were ever sensible of the love of God being shed abroad in their hearts, have through unwatchfulness suffered that love to become cold, and who yet, may think themselves rich and full, and in want of nothing, whose faith in their Redeemer has degenerated into a carnal lukewarm state of security, and of whom it may be said, that "many are weak and sickly,"—"and many sleep." If such be the case, and the lives of many evidence that it is so,—how shall these bend the knee in acceptable prayer, before the most high God? Is it not needful for these to anoint their "eyes with eye salve"—"that they may see" their condition; and is this not a needful preparation, before they can offer up acceptable prayer?

But the Seceders say: "In the simple *command* of our Lord, we have not only a warrant for private prayer, but an imperative obligation to that duty: *no preparation is enjoined, nor is any implied*, but a sense of need, and absolute impotence, on the one hand; and on the other, faith that God is able and willing to supply our wants, when we ask in the name of Christ. This sense of destitution, and every degree of living faith, are from the operation of the Holy Spirit upon the heart; and where are we told to wait for a further

* Mark xiii., 33.

† Ib. i., 37.

preparation.”* This may serve for an example of the insidious manner in which the views of the Seceders, were at the first propagated; we need not, therefore, be surprised that the unwary were, many of them, caught in the snare. There are, indeed, certain words put in italics on which evidently the greatest emphasis was intended to be laid, as that “*no preparation was enjoined nor is any implied*,” which serve to indicate the tendency of their views. It is argued that a sense of our condition, and faith that God is able and willing to supply our wants, when we do not ask “*amiss*,” are essential requisites in all true prayer; and these can only be obtained by the operation of the Holy Spirit on the heart. In answer to the enquiry “Where are we told to wait for further preparation?” We would remind them of the answer of our Blessed Lord to them who were urging him to go up to Jerusalem; “My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready;”† if, then, the time of the Lord Jesus was not “always ready,” how much more have we need to wait, if we be sensible that the “answer of the tongue,” as well as “the preparation of the heart in man, are from the Lord!” “All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the Spirits.”‡ It is therefore needful to wait for ability acceptably to utter words before God, “for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, *because* he maketh intercession for the Saints according to the will of God;|| and it is those petitions only, whether secret or vocal, which are according to the will of God, that can find acceptance with Him.

But we shall find those of this party afterward, in a somewhat less guarded manner, avowing their tenets, though ambiguity may still be studied. In the work of the writer§ whose opinions we shall next advert to, there are many quotations from Scripture, which in the sense intended by the sacred penman, we accept with all willingness; but from the Semi-Pelagian interpretations of the writer, we freely dissent. The following quotations from his book, may serve as a clue to all his conclusions:—

“Allow me, then, to intreat you, my fellow-members, to apply to the subject of religion that liberal spirit of free and untrammelled enquiry, which you so successfully employ on subjects of infinitely less moment; feeling assured, as I do, that a prayerful study of the word of God, will

* Beacon, p. 101.

† John vii., 6.

‡ Prov. xvi., 2.

|| Rom. viii., 26, 27.

§ R. Ball's “Holy Scripture the test of Truth.”

build you up in that faith, once delivered to the Saints and direct you to lay hold of that hope of eternal life which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

So, then, it is that free and *untrammelled* spirit of enquiry that is employed *on other subjects*, which, in the study of the Scriptures, is to enable us to lay hold on the hope of eternal life. Here is even not any mention of the need we have of the assistance and direction of the Holy Spirit to guide us unto all truth. In the following page, it is true, he uses the words of the great Apostle to the Gentiles: “I commend you to God, and the word of *his grace*, which is able to *build you up* and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”† But how does this contrast with *his* means as before specified! We deny his premises, though we accept with all readiness of mind those of the great Apostle.

But let us hear this writer further, respecting the sufficiency of his means. “But why should the idea of our bringing a seed, an inward light, or an inward principle into the world with us, or having it *implanted* in us, as soon as we are born, move us to love God *more* than we should be induced to love Him, because he has furnished us with bodily organs, or with intellectual powers?”‡

It is painful to contemplate the misrepresentation and levity with which this last extract is written; but what we have at present to do with, is the Pelagianism of the opinions here openly avowed. Pelagius himself, could hardly advance any thing more offensive to true piety. It does not become us, poor finite creatures, to compare or to comment in this manner, on the various gifts of the Creator, with reference to the bountiful giver; all his works were good, but we ought to remember that man by transgression fell, and that he can only be renewed again into the image of Him that created him, by the *power* and operation of the promised seed, which is Christ. He “is the bringer in of that better hope by which we draw nigh unto God,” and without his merciful aid all the boasted energies of a “liberal spirit of free and untrammelled enquiry,” assisted by the possession of the most shining intellectual powers, of which a poor fallen creature could ever boast, can never enable us to approach the throne of grace with acceptance.

This writer seems himself to be sensible that there may exist a sense of destitution without the feeling of a capacity for true prayer, and he has, therefore, provided several passages of Scripture to serve as substitutes for that “better

* R. Ball's “Holy Scripture the test of Truth, p. 75.

† Acts xx., 32.

‡ R. Ball, Appendix, p. 63.

hope by which we draw nigh unto God." apparently forgetting the declaration, "Is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? Behold I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words, every one from his neighbour."* Where do we see the effects of the burning up of the chaff, and of the hammer, breaking the rocky hearts in pieces, or contriting the spirits of those who, by their continuance in wilful disobedience, are prevented from experiencing that "the answer of the tongue, and the preparation of the heart in man, are from the Lord." Though, like the Pharisees, they may appeal to the authority, or steal the words of Scripture, in their prayers,—yet will they be found in a worse condition than the publican, who, having experienced his rocky heart contrited, which was evidenced in his not daring, so much as to lift up his eyes to heaven, yet was enabled to cry with acceptance, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" How is all the spirit of untrammelled and free inquiry, and all the pride of intellectual powers, to be compared to those groanings, which could scarcely find utterance, and which were evidently produced in the heart by the immediate operation of the mighty power of God.

But again to refer to the Seceders, who say in their "Epistle"—

"Under a painful sense of the incalculable loss many of us have sustained from perverted views on the subject of prayer, we venture most earnestly to entreat to enter upon a scriptural examination of this duty, and blessed privilege." "There are those who in this and in other instances have put the guard on the wrong side, and by surrounding the throne of grace with a Sinai-like awfulness, have, we fear, ministered but too fatally to the indifference, indolence, pride, and unbelief of man's naturally hard heart; and contrary to the general tenor and in opposition to the express language of Holy Scripture, have inculcated the idea that none should pray without a perceptible and supernatural motion thereto. The word teacheth otherwise. Our Lord, on being entreated by his disciples to teach them to pray, instructed them by a narrative, recorded in Luke xi., 5, in which he enforces the duty by the strongest encouragement, and implies the qualification to be a sense of want."†

In this extract, it is asserted, that the qualification for prayer is "a sense of want;" that a sense of want is indisputably an essential qualification, is fully acknowledged;—but are there no other qualifications needful? They do not venture to say, that there are not, but from their silence on the subject, they leave it to be inferred by their readers, that such is the case. They have chosen to take their account

* Jer. xx. iii., 28, 29, 30.

† Epistle.

from Luke xi., where there occur in the version of the Lord's prayer there given, the words :—"and forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us;" which certainly implies a further qualification than a mere sense of want; but had they chosen to consult Matthew, ch. vi., they would have found the necessity of this qualification further illustrated. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." No doubt *all* men would wish themselves forgiven, and may therefore have the qualification which the Seceders require,—“a sense of want;”—but we learn here, that it was not sufficient, from the comment given by the Saviour of men, upon his own words: here it is seen, that if we forgive not others their trespasses, we need not hope to be forgiven, and therefore cannot truly believe that the things for which we petition will be given to us.

But it is essential in all true prayer that it be the prayer of faith; “And Jesus said unto them, have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things that he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore, I say unto you, what things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that you receive them and ye shall have them.”* We see, then, according to the doctrine of our Lord, when we pray, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me,”† that if we have not forgiven others their trespasses we can have no right to expect or to believe that we shall ever receive an answer to the prayer, “Create in me a clean heart, O God,” and, therefore, not being the prayer of faith, it cannot find acceptance with Him who is said to be “of purer eyes than to behold evil.” “Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord, my God, mine holy One? We shall not die. O Lord thou hast ordained them for judgment; and O, mighty God, thou hast established them for correction. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity; wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?”‡

But there are other “qualifications necessary,”—“therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and *there* rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave *there* thy gift

* Mark xi., 22, 24.

† Ps. li., 10.

‡ Habk. i., 12, 13.

before the altar, and go thy way; first, be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.* It is, then, an essential "qualification" that we make compensation to, and be reconciled with those that have ought against us; for "he that turneth away his ear, from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination."† Some of those negative qualities, which may operate as hinderances to prayer, have now been briefly considered, and there are doubtless many others. There are also "qualifications" of a positive nature, which are essential to all true and acceptable prayer, and which it is needful should operate on our hearts and feelings, when we venture to approach the Divine footstool; it will, therefore, be necessary to notice these, in considering the opinions of the Seceders.

The Prophet Jeremiah, describes in beautiful and affecting language some of these "preparations of the heart which are of the Lord," and which eminently qualify for that answer of the tongue, which can only be obtained through the like precious influence. "The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and *quietly wait* for the salvation of the Lord. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone, and keepeth silence because he hath born it upon him, he putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope."‡

The silence here recommended, is not as some have slanderously reported, "a deadening system of sepulchral silence,"§ but is the blessed experience of many who have found that "the Lord is good unto them that wait for him"—that "it is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." "But this is a path that no fowl knoweth, that the vulture's eye hath not seen;" yet this knowledge cheers the path of the true Christian, and this hope can only be attained through living faith;—not that faith, which "being alone, is dead," but that which strengthens the mind to draw nigh unto God, in true and fervent prayer. Those who are thus exercised, are made livingly to understand the declaration of the prophet;—"The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him;"§ equally intelligible to such is the language of another prophet,—"Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord, for he is raised up, out of his holy habitation,"¶ but this requires such a subjugation of the mind and will, that those who are full of their own self-sufficiency cannot attain unto or even under-

* Matt. v., 23, 24.

† Prov. xviii., 9.

‡ Lam. iii., 25, 28.

§ Quakerism Examined, p. 451.

§ Habk. ii., 20.

¶ Zach. ii., 13.

stand: hence arises the extreme importance of the attainment of the child-like state, that state in which we become fitted to receive instruction in righteousness, and without which we can make no advances therein, or possess any "qualification" for true and acceptable prayer.

The author of "Quakerism Examined," remarks that—"to enumerate the evils that result from radical error, would be endless; but I cannot be satisfied to close this examination of the system of Quakerism, without very seriously adverting to the dreadful evil which results from the notion of an "inward light as it relates to prayer."* After the attention which has been bestowed on this important subject, as it regards the opinions of the Seceders, it would seem needless to continue the investigation further, were it not for the extraordinary language made use of, at the conclusion of the last extract. But how a sense of want, which they themselves allow to be a needful "qualification," is to be obtained, unless the mind be inwardly illuminated with respect to its condition, would be difficult to prove. The Seceders themselves, say in their epistle, that a sense of destitution is obtained "from the operation of the Holy Spirit upon the heart;" now that which *manifests* to us our condition, by its operation *upon the heart*, is an inward light, "for whatsoever doth make manifest is light."

But their quarrel in this instance, at least, seems to be with the use of terms, otherwise the objection would involve an absurdity; unless, indeed, they really do not believe in any spiritual illumination whatever. The reasonings of the writer from whom the extract is taken, might seem to lead his reader to the conclusion that *he* did not, because he says, "Is there a single passage in the New Testament by which it can be proved, that our Lord Jesus Christ, or his Apostles, ever directed any persons to a light within themselves?"† But we can hardly believe that the Seceders in general, have retrograded so far, as to adopt the opinions of simple Pelagianism, as avowed in the last extract.

Some may object to the use of the terms "inward light," "universal and saving light," &c., because they are not to be found in precisely the same words in Holy Scripture; but these persons should recollect, that the occasion had not then arisen for their use. The Christians in the time of the Apostles, and it is believed for long after, accepted the doctrine of spiritual illumination, and of spiritual communion with each other, and with the Great Head of the Church, in all its fulness. "Ye are our Epistle, written in our heart, known

* Quakerism Examined, p. 446. † Quakerism Examined, p. 13.

and read of all men; forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, *written not with ink, but with the Spirit* of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.* "Ye, also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.†

"Until Pelagius arose, the necessity of internal efficacious grace was not disputed." Hence, there was no occasion for the use of the term "inward light," to distinguish this doctrine from the opinion of those who held that all men with respect to the means, by which they are brought to a knowledge of the truth, were furnished with nothing but an external revelation. In like manner, after the Schoolmen by their subtleties, and distinctions, had endeavoured to prove that the knowledge of Christ as he is made known in the heart, by the testimony of the "Holy Spirit, that proceedeth from the Father," "had ceased to be immediately communicated to the soul, through that Holy influence, and that to us on the contrary, all revelation was mediate, and after they had invented the distinctions between objective and subjective revelation, asserting that to the Apostles only, was the knowledge of the truths of the Gospel communicated by objective or immediate revelation, but that to the Church and to believers in the present day, Divine Truth was communicated only by subjective revelation, or by the Holy Spirit secretly influencing the mind to receive the truths recorded in Scripture; then, it became necessary for those who dissented from such opinions, to assert the truth in opposition to these perverted views of Christian Doctrine. They asserted, therefore, that to the church and to believers in the present day, according to the promise of the Redeemer to be with his Church to the end of the world, there was still afforded to his people, not only that influence by which we can be enabled rightly to understand the sacred truths of Scripture, or what the Schoolmen termed subjective revelation;—but, also, that by which the truths of the Gospel were communicated to the souls of men, however circumstanced, so far as it was needful for their redemption from the power of sin; and for their salvation, such a measure of this grace as may be sufficient to effect the gracious purposes of Him, who gave himself a ransom for the sins of the whole world: and that this grace so communicated was given not only to individuals in an immediate, or, as the Schoolmen, in an objective manner; but that this grace had "appeared to all men."

* 2d Cor. iii., 2, 3.

† 1st. Peter. ii., 5.

‡ Milner, Cent. v., 4.

Hence it was that Barclay and his coadjutors asserted, that men were favoured with an "inward light," as distinguished from the external light of Holy Scripture; and that this light was communicated immediately to the soul; that men were favoured not only with subjective, but also with objective revelation. Hence arose the necessity under which the early Friends were led to adopt these terms of the Schoolmen in their controversies with them, and to assert generally; that "the grace of God that hath appeared to all men," is "an universal and saving light." That the scholastic terms here adverted to, did not originate with R. Barclay, appears from the following quotation from George Keith's "*Immediate Revelation not ceased*," an authority that some have felt little objection to quote when it has suited their purpose. Keith says, "I am constrained to use these terms for their (his opponents') sake."* He refers to a work by Robert Barron, who is "called Doctor of Divinity in Aberdeen," whose book, he says, was written some years before his own; as follows:—"When he declared his doctrine concerning immediate or inward Revelation, *ex parte objecti*, and *ex parte subjecti*, affirming that *ex parte objecti*, to be ceased." Keith's book is dated the 7th of the 4th Month, 1668. The reader may observe, that Barron's book was written some years before R. Barclay returned from France (where he had in part received his education) in 1666, being then 16 years of age; and he did not join the Society of Friends until 1667. The *Theses Theological* and *Apology* of R. Barclay bear the date of 1675, seven years after the publication of Keith; and Keith's work, as before stated, was published some years after R. Barron's, whose mode of reasoning was employed by the students of Aberdeen in their disputes with Barclay and Keith, and with which they appear to have been familiarly acquainted before the apology was written. It is, therefore, evident, beyond controversy, that the terms objective and subjective revelation did not originate with Friends; but that it was in answering their opponents that they were driven to the use of them. They themselves, as regards their doctrines, might adopt the language used by the Apostle in all its simplicity and truth; "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God: that we *might know* the things which are *freely* given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the *Holy Ghost* teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual."†

* Keith's *Immediate Revelation*, p. 150. † 1 Cor. ii., 12, 13.

Before concluding this essay, we would offer a few remarks on the doctrine held by the Seceders, that we must necessarily continue sinners for the term of life. This doctrine is stated, in the most explicit terms, in the following extract, and as there is no Scripture to be found that can, by any fair and simple construction, be made to support this opinion, it may, therefore, be justly ranked with those views, which are produced by the delusion of the Devil. The extract is as follows :—"The Apostle Paul declares, ye cannot do the things that ye would ;*—why ? Because the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and these are contrary the one to the other. How then can there be perfection while there is flesh to lust against the spirit ? No ; sin has ruined the whole frame ; and, although we have the sure hope that our vile body shall be changed and fashioned according to Christ's glorious body, yet while we have this vile body, such is its influence, that even the most watchful and the most devoted and energetic saints will ever be made sensible to their deep humiliation, that, so far from perfection, their best actions, words, and thoughts, require atoning blood, and their very tears want washing in it."†

This copious extract has been given that it may appear that the subject has been fairly met, persuaded as we are that the whole, except the quotations from Scripture, is a delusion of the grand adversary, to prevent poor mortals from pressing after the reward set before them, even the victory of the saints. "For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world : and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."‡ It may be true that those who are in the possession of no other faith than that which, being alone, is dead, can never attain to this, even their best actions, words, and thoughts, need washing, but those who experience what is intimated by the Apostle Paul : "and such were some of you ; but ye *are washed*, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God,"|| evidence that they are endued with that faith that giveth the victory and overcometh the world. But let us turn to the Scriptures adduced, and see how they support the opinion that we necessarily sin for the term of life ; and first, the passage (Gal. v.) where we shall find the meaning of the Apostle grossly perverted : "This I say, then, walk in the spirit, and ye *shall not* fulfil the lust of the flesh,"§ "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against

* Gal. v., 17.

† J. Wilkinson, p. 299, 300.

‡ 1 John v., 4.

|| 1 Cor. vi., 11.

§ Ib. 16.

the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would ;”* “for if ye be *led by the spirit* ye are not under the law;”† “but the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such, there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have *crucified the flesh*, with the affections and lusts.”‡ How any man durst venture so to contradict the plain sense of the Apostle, from whom he quotes, it is difficult to conceive, unless labouring under the grossest delusion. The Apostle’s language is, “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.” This, the writer contradicts, and evidently disbelieves; but what right has any one, professing to be a Christian writer, to contradict, in so unblushing a manner, the express language of Scripture?—and that, merely because of his own unbelief; which, with all his skill in sophistry, he cannot cover?

In another place he treats the Apostle John little better than the Apostle Paul; he quotes 1 John i., 10,—“If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us;” and then adds, “But this is not all, for he had said before (v. 8) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”|| From the latter reference, he thinks that he proves, that the Apostle meant to say that all continue to be sinners, whatever might be their advances in holiness; but it is evident that the Apostle only meant to assert, that all had sinned; not that all continued in sin for the term of life: otherwise what could have been his meaning when he says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness?”§ But how can *those* be said to be cleansed from all unrighteousness, whose “best actions, words, and thoughts,” are polluted with sin? The Apostle says, “whosoever abideth in him (Christ) sinneth not; whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him.”¶

The Apostle John uses the following language in the introduction to the Book of Revelations, in his address to the Churches:—“I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.”** Some readers might find occasion to stumble at the language of this address; for the word kingdom implies dominion: how, then, is it consistent with a state of tribu-

* 1 Cor. vi., 17.

† Ib. 18.

‡ Ib. 22, 24.

|| J. Wilkinson, Quakerism Examined, p. 296.

§ 1 John i., 9.

¶ John iii., 6.

** Rev. i., 9.

lation, or with patience, in which suffering is implied? But such is the Christian's course, and such are the qualifications for the conflict that insures the victory; dominion must be held, and the warfare must be maintained against all the assaults of the enemy, through the power of Him "who led captivity captive, and obtained gifts for men, yea for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell amongst them." But even the great Head of the Church was tempted like as we are, and yet without sin. And the apostle Paul, after having been highly favoured, says—"And lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations, there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure." For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, "my grace is *sufficient* for thee: for my strength is made perfect *in weakness*.*" Here we see that the apostle, in a season of conflict, had an assurance given him, that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ was sufficient for him. It is even said of the Saviour himself, "that "it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through sufferings."† It appears, therefore, that a state of temptation and conflict, is not inconsistent with exemption from sin, or even with the state of the highest purity and holiness, as is manifest from the example of the Saviour himself, and that the grace which comes from Him is sufficient, though made perfect in weakness: thus, then, the faithful can say—"And behold God himself is with us for our Captain."‡

In concluding this essay in vindication of the faith as it was delivered to the saints, the writer desires to draw the attention of his readers to the closing words of the Epistle of Jude:—

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy; to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever.—Amen."||

* 2 Cor. xii., 7, 9.

† Heb. ii., 10.

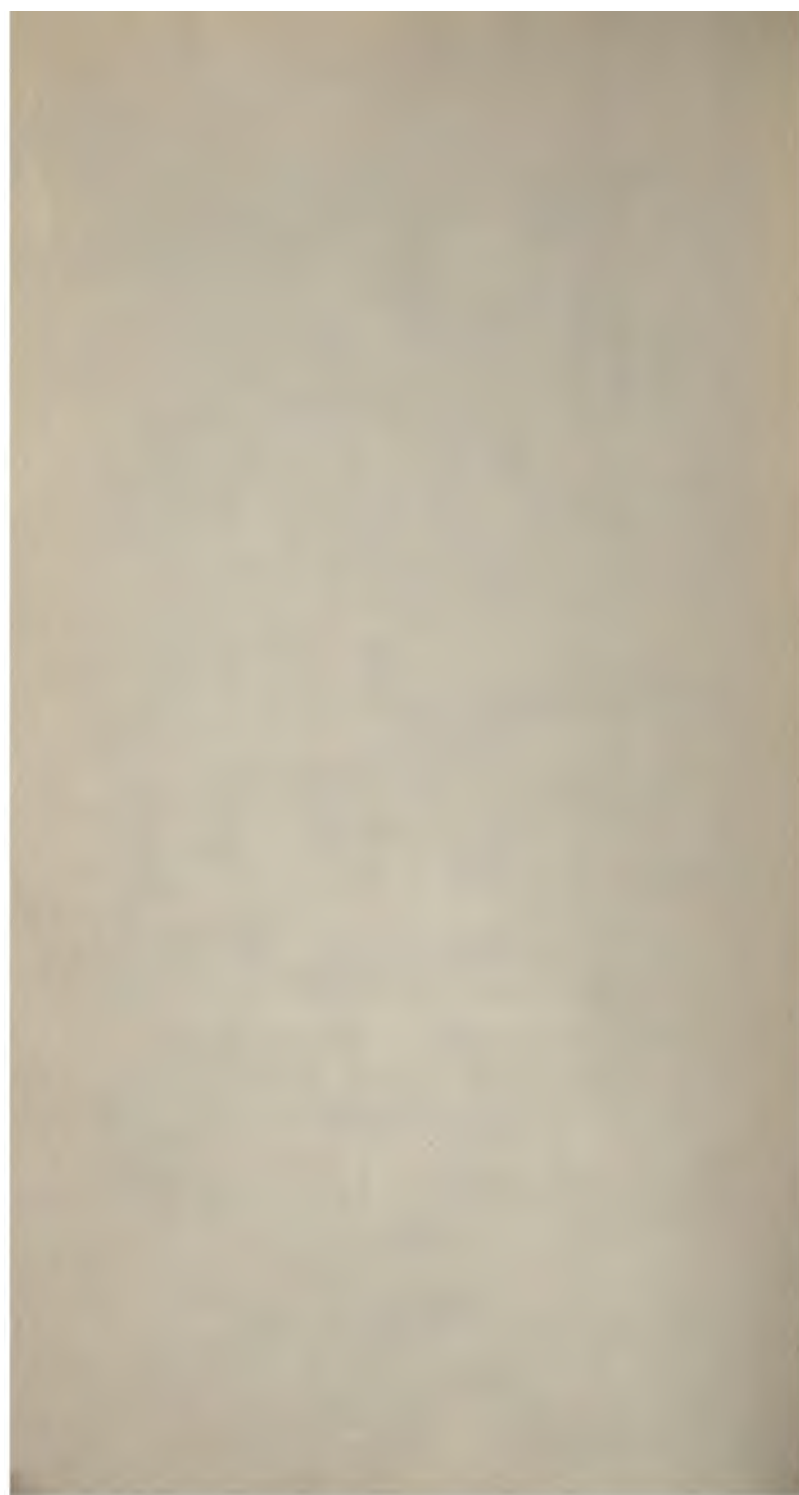
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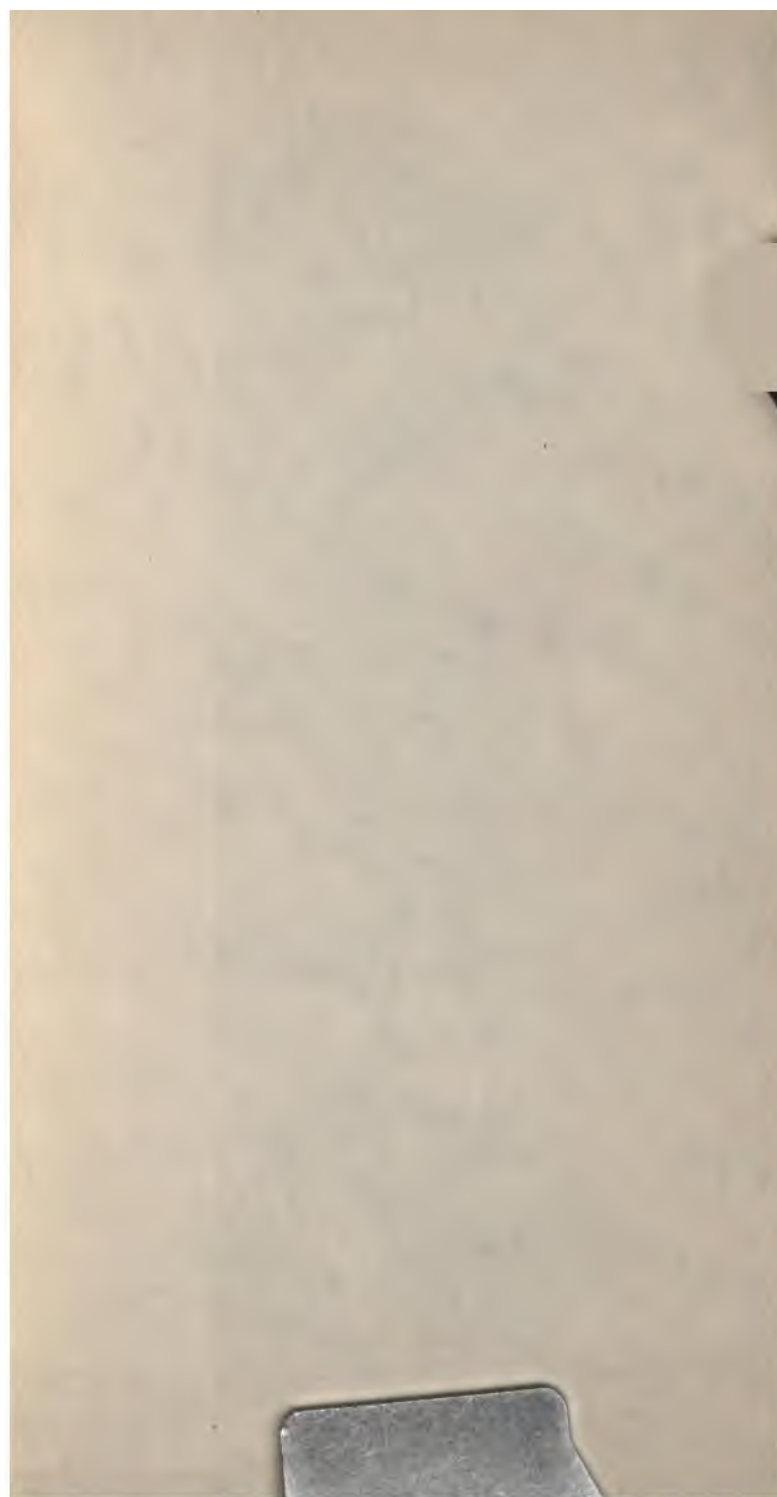
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